

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of operating a web site, comprising:
 - a) identifying a first visitor to the web site;
 - b) performing background research on the first visitor;
 - 5 c) based on the background research, selecting first information from a collection of information; and
 - d) transmitting the first information to the first visitor.
- 10 2. Method according to claim 1, and further comprising:
 - e) identifying a second visitor to the web site;
 - f) performing second background research on the second visitor;
 - 15 g) based on the second background research, selecting, from the collection of information, second information which is different from the first information; and
 - h) transmitting the second information to the second visitor.
- 20 3. Method according to claim 1, wherein the first background research comprises contacting another web site.
4. Method according to claim 2, wherein the second background research comprises contacting said other web site.
- 25 5. A method of operating a web site, comprising:
 - a) receiving an inquiry from a visitor to the web site;
 - b) estimating whether the visitor possesses selected characteristics;
 - c) based on the estimate, selecting first information from a collection of information;

d) in response to the inquiry, selecting second information; and
e) compiling the first and second information into a message, and
transmitting the message to the visitor.

5 6. Method according to claim 5, wherein the message comprises a
web page.

7. Method according to claim 5, wherein the message comprises an
electronic mail message.

10 8. Method according to claim 5, wherein the selected characteristics
comprise the specific identity of the visitor.

15 9. Method according to claim 8, wherein the selected characteristics
contain no characteristics in addition to the specific identity of the
individual.

10. A method of operating a web site, comprising:
a) receiving an inquiry from a visitor to the web site;
20 b) ascertaining identity of the visitor;
c) based on the identity, deriving visitor-specific information;
d) based on the inquiry, deriving response information; and
e) compiling the visitor-specific information and the response
information into a message, and transmitting the message to the visitor.

25 11. Method according to claim 10, wherein the message comprises a
web page.

12. Method according to claim 10, wherein the message comprises an electronic mail message.

5 13. A method of operating a web site, comprising:

- a) receiving an inquiry from a visitor to the web site;
- b) making an estimate of selected characteristics of the visitor;
- c) asking the visitor whether customer-specific information is desired and, if so, deriving customer-specific information based on the estimate;
- d) based on the inquiry, selecting second information from the collection; and
- e) compiling the first and second information into a message, and transmitting the message to the visitor.